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ACTION EA 19

INFO SP 02, SS 35, GPM 03, SC 01, NSC 10, RSC 01, L 03, H 02, P 04, INR 07,
SAH 03, SAL 01, NSCE 00, CIAE 00, SSO 00, DOLE 00, USIE 00, NSAE 00,
CCO 00, AID 30, IO 21, RSR 01, /143 W

O R 061330Z SEP 67 ZFF1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6318
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4133
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2439
AMCONSUL DANANG 902

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5062

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PHAN KHAC SUU

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MORNING SEPT 6, PHAN KHAC SUU
CHARGED THAT ELECTION WAS BLATANTLY RIGGED. ACCORDING TO SUU,
ELECTION OFFICIALS CLOSED MANY POLLING PLACES LONG BEFORE 1600,
WITHHELD BALLOTS OF HUONG, KY AND SUU, AND MANIPULATED FIGURES
DURING COUNTING PROCESS. IN ADDITION, VOTER TURNOUT WAS
GROSSLY INFLATED.

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2. MAJOR REASON FOR DZU'S STRONG FINISH WAS THAT VOTERS DID
NOT RECEIVE BALLOTS OF SUU, HUONG AND KY. SIMILARLY, NGUYEN
DINH QUAT MADE GOOD SHOWING BECAUSE VOTERS, LOOKING FOR SUU'S
BALLOT AND FAILING TO SEE IT, SELECTED THE ONLY "WATER BUFFALO"

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THEY COULD FIND.

3. SUU ALLEGED THAT BINH MINH NEWSPAPER ARTICLE OF SEPT 2, WHICH FALSELY REPORTED THAT HE HAD WITHDRAWN, ALSO DID HIM DAMAGE. MANY ELECTION OFFICIALS USED THAT ARTICLE AS PRETEXT FOR WITHHOLDING SUU BALLOT. FOR THIS SUU BLAMES TRAN VAN HUONG CAMPA ALTHOUGH NOT HUONG HIMSELF.

4. SUU REJECTED SUGGESTION THAT ELECTION WAS RELATIVELY FAIR AND THAT OUTCOME WAS NOT DETERMINED BY CHEATING. EMBOFF NOTED THAT HE HAD SEEN OR HEARD OF VERY FEW ELECTION DAY IRREGULARITIES SUCH AS SUU DESCRIBED. SUU REPLIED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR AMERICANS TO KNOW WHAT REALLY TAKES PLACE IN VIET NAM. HOWEVER, SUU CHARITABLY EXEMPTS US FROM CRITICISM; GVN IS THE SOLE CULPRIT. SUU ADDED THAT RUNNING MATE PHAN QUANG DAN PUBLICLY ACCEPTS CONDUCT OF ELECTION, EVEN THOUGH HE AGREES WITH SUU'S VIEW, SIMPLY BECAUSE HE DOES NOT WANT TO DISAPPOINT OR OFFEND AMERICANS. ONLY HOPE FOR FAIR ELECTION, SUU CONCLUDED,

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WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR AMERICANS TO MAN EVERY POLLING STATION.

5. SUU SAID THAT HE HAS TALKED TO TRUONG DINH DZU, AND WILL JOIN DZU AND OTHER CANDIDATES IN FORMAL PROTEST TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO SUU, DZU PROPOSED AN UNREALISTIC AND EXCESSIVELY HARSH PROTEST. DZU ALLEGEDLY WANTED TO SUBMIT JOINT PROTEST TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, AND ENLIST SUPPORT OF WORLD OPINION. SUU CLAIMS TO HAVE REMINDED DZU THAT VIETNAMESE ELECTION IS AN INTERNAL MATTER AND THAT INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL RECOURSE IS AVAILABLE WITHIN VIETNAMESE FRAMEWORK. SUU ALSO SAID THAT HE MANAGED TO TONE DOWN CHARGES IN JOINT PROTEST. FOR EXAMPLE, DESPITE HIS CONVICTION THAT VOTING ITSELF WAS THOROUGHLY RIGGED, SUU ADMITTED THAT THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE OF RIGGING. THEREFORE HE CLAIMS THAT PROTEST WILL DEAL ONLY WITH EASILY PROVABLE CAMPAIGN IRREGULARITIES (EXCESSIVE USE OF TELEVISION BY THIEU-KY, ETC.).

6. SUU SAID THAT HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE BY DEFEATED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES MORNING SEPT 7 AT WHICH THEY WILL PRESENT EVIDENCE OF IRREGULARITIES. (PRESS CONFERENCE,

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LIKE JOINT PROTEST, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INITIATED BY TRUONG DINH DZU.) SUU CLAIMED THAT ALL TEN CIVILIAN CANDIDATES OR

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THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WILL ATTEND. SUU SAID HE WAS ASKED TO PRESIDE OVER THE PEESS CONFERENCE, SINCE OTHER CANDIDATES RESPECT HIM MORE THAN THEY DO DZU. HE HAS AGREED TO DO SO, IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE RADICAL INFLUENCES OF DZU. SUU NOTED DZU'S CHECKERED BACKGROUND AND IMPLIED THAT HE IS NONE TOO TRUST-WORTHY.

7. SUU PROFESSED TO AGREE THAT CANDIDATES SHOULD HEW TO LETTER OF ELECTORAL LAW AND CONSTITUTION IN PROTESTING IRREGULARITIES THEY BELIEVE MAY HAVE OCCURRED, AND THAT VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS ARE INAPPROPRIATE AND DANGEROUS. HE ALSO SAID THAT LOSERS SHOULD AND WOULD ACCEPT DECISION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS TO VALIDITY OF ELECTION. (SUU HOWEVER, SAID THAT HE EXPECTS ASSEMBLY TO RULE ELECTION INVALID.)

8. SUU WAS NOT FORTHCOMING WHEN ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATION WITH, OR PARTICIPATION IN, THIEU GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT POSITION IN THAT GOVERNMENT ONLY "IF MY POLICIES ARE FOLLOWED," PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT. A MEANINGLESS "SUPREME ADVISOR"

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POSITION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. SUU APPEARS TO HAVE CONCLUDED (PRESUMABLY SINCE SEPT 3) THAT POLITICAL PARTIES RATHER THAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF ARE KEY TO NATIONAL UNITY AND VICTORY OVER COMMUNISTS. ACCORDINGLY, HE PLANS TO DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO DEVELOPMENT OF A BROAD, RURAL-BASED P RTY, THE "NEW

CITIZEN MOVEMENT," WHICH WILL ORGANIZE RURALMASSES AND DEVELOP COUNTRYSIDE MOVEMENT WOULD BE INDEPENDENT, FREE TO CRITICIZE OR SUPPORT GOVERNMENT DEPENDING ON ISSUE IN QUESTION. IT WOULD NOT, SUU EMPHASIZED, BE PART OF A TRUONG DINH DZU-LED OPPOSITION.

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9. COMMENT A) GIVEN SUU'S CONFIDENCE IN THE POPULAR APPEAL OF HIS PERSONALITY, HE PROBABLY BELIEVES MOST OF WHAT HE SAID ABOUT RIGGING OF ELECTION. HE IS RELUCTANT TO ADMIT ANY OTHER REASON FOR HIS DEFEAT. DESPITE HIS CLAIMS THAT HE INTENDS TO EXERT MODERATING INFLUENCE ON OTHER DEFEATED CANDIDATES, WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT SUU WILL TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE LEAD IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD.

B) HOWEVER, SUU DOES NOT APPEAR TO TOTALLY RULE OUT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. GIVEN SUFFICIENT FLATTERY SUU MIGHT BE CONVINCED TO ACCEPT RELATIVELY POWERLESS POSITION, WITHOUT PROVIDE THAT "MY POLICIES ARE FOLLOWED."

GP-3
BUNKER

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